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Letter dated 11 February 2016 from the Permanent Representative of the Democratic Republic of the Congo to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

On instructions from my Government, I have the honour to bring to the attention of the Security Council a situation reported by Refugees International, an independent United States non-governmental organization based in Washington, D.C., which operates in the border area between the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Rwanda and Burundi. After the cycle of wars that have characterized the eastern part of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, this situation could risk once again plunging the area into unrest, violence and atrocities. The events described by Refugees International were also reported by the Group of Experts on the Democratic Republic of the Congo in their latest report of January 2016.

These two corroborating sources confirm that refugees from Burundi living in camps in Rwanda are being subjected to recruitment and are undergoing military training in the country's national parks, Nyungwe Forest National Park in particular. After the training, these refugees, equipped with weapons, are infiltrated into the Democratic Republic of the Congo through Uvira and Kanvinvira, with false Congolese voter registration cards to allow them to pass as residents of the country, before their infiltration into Burundi for the purpose of overthrowing the administration in Bujumbura.

The events reported above have already been brought to the attention of the Security Council by the Group of Experts and by Refugees International so that the necessary measures can be taken to consolidate peace and security in a region that remains fragile and in order to avoid aggravating the security situation in Burundi. It is important to stress to the Council that the security services of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, which have apprehended several members of these refugee groups, have also confirmed these facts.

Given the foregoing, and denouncing the dishonest actions of Rwanda, which would like to shift the responsibility for destabilizing Burundi onto the Democratic Republic of the Congo, my Government believes that this situation violates the commitments made by the States of the region, in accordance with the provisions of the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework for the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Region, which all States of the region freely signed. Such a violation thus needs to be denounced and must not be tolerated.

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Consequently, my Government requests the Security Council to examine this situation, which is in violation of the Framework and international refugee law, and requests it to:

(a) Immediately condemn these actions, which are in violation of the relevant Security Council resolutions and undermine the mandate given to the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo to combat armed groups and other negative forces in the Democratic Republic of the Congo;

(b) Call on Rwanda to respect its international commitments and to cease recruitment and all subsequent operations without delay;

(c) Call on Rwanda to respect the civilian character of refugee camps and to stop recruiting minors on behalf of an armed group and sending them into the Democratic Republic of the Congo;

(d) Call on Rwanda to work to promote peace and build a climate of trust conducive to cooperation in the region.

My Government requests the Security Council to pursue this matter and to circulate this letter as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Ignace **Gata Mavita**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

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Security Council

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Report of the Secretary-General on developments in Guinea-Bissau and the activities of the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau

I. Introduction

1. The present report is submitted pursuant to Security Council resolution 2203 (2015), by which the Council extended the mandate of the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau (UNIOGBIS) until 29 February 2016 and requested me to submit reports to it every six months on the implementation of the resolution. The report also provides an update on key political, security, human rights, socioeconomic and humanitarian developments in Guinea-Bissau since the issuance of my report of 13 August 2015 (S/2015/626).

II. Major developments in Guinea-Bissau

A. Political situation

2. The political environment in Guinea-Bissau has continued to be marked by tensions and divisions within the ruling African Party for the Independence of Guinea and Cabo Verde (PAIGC) and among the sovereign organs of the State. The reporting period saw the parties engaged in political and legal battles over the appointment of a new Prime Minister, the formation of a new Government and the adoption of the Government's programme.

3. On 17 August, in response to a request by the President of Guinea-Bissau, José Mário Vaz, to PAIGC to nominate a new Prime Minister to replace Domingos Simões Pereira, who had been dismissed on 12 August, PAIGC renominated Mr. Simões Pereira. On 20 August, the President issued a decree appointing the Party's third Vice-President, Baciro Djá, as Prime Minister instead. Mr. Djá was sworn in on the same day. The appointment was met with widespread condemnation, in particular by PAIGC, which had suspended Mr. Djá on 6 August following his alleged refusal to respond to its requests to account for expenses incurred during his management of the 2014 electoral campaign. On 24 August, the National Assembly adopted a resolution requesting the annulment of the presidential decree, calling for ongoing dialogue among State institutions and proposing the establishment of a stability pact to ensure political and social stability and the country's governability until the completion of the ninth legislature and presidential

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term. Furthermore, the National Assembly approved the creation of a parliamentary commission to investigate the veracity of crimes, including corruption, embezzlement, nepotism and other economic crimes, alleged by President Vaz, in his 12 August address to the nation, to have been committed by members of the Government of Prime Minister Simões Pereira. On 8 September, only one day after the swearing-in of the Government of Prime Minister Djá, the Supreme Court of Justice unanimously ruled that the presidential decree appointing Mr. Djá was unconstitutional. In a decree issued on 9 September, the President dismissed the Government of Prime Minister Djá following the latter's resignation.

4. At an Extraordinary Summit of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) held on 12 September, the Authority of Heads of State and Government of ECOWAS extended the mandate of its Mission in Guinea-Bissau (ECOMIB) through June 2016. It also mandated the President of Senegal, Macky Sall, and the President of Guinea, Alpha Condé, in their respective capacities as ECOWAS Chair and ECOWAS Mediator for Guinea-Bissau, with the assistance of the former President of Nigeria Olusegun Obasanjo, in his capacity as Special Envoy of the President of Nigeria, Muhammadu Buhari, to facilitate dialogue with all stakeholders to find a lasting solution to the crisis.

5. In pursuance of that request, former President Obasanjo visited Guinea-Bissau twice to help resolve the political crisis. During his visit from 15 to 17 September, he held intensive consultations with President Vaz and the leadership of PAIGC, the Party for Social Renewal (PRS), the Democratic Convergence Party and the Union for Change, all represented in the National Assembly. He also met with the Speaker of Parliament and the President of the Supreme Court of Justice. On 16 September, President Vaz initiated consultations with the five political parties represented in the National Assembly regarding the appointment of a new Prime Minister. In his consultations with PAIGC, he requested that it propose three names for the position of Prime Minister. In response, the Party submitted the name of its First Vice-President, Carlos Correia, which was accepted by the President. On 17 September, Mr. Correia was appointed and sworn into office by President Vaz. At a press conference on the same day, former President Obasanjo proposed that President Vaz, the National Assembly, the Prime Minister, political parties and civil society should sign the proposed stability pact to promote cooperation and dialogue.

6. On 2 October, following a series of consultations within PAIGC and with other political parties, Prime Minister Correia submitted his list of Cabinet nominees to President Vaz. In a letter dated 6 October, the President informed the Prime Minister of his decision not to appoint the proposed Cabinet, citing, inter alia, ongoing parliamentary investigations into mismanagement allegedly committed by some of the nominees. In response to the President's request for a new list, the Prime Minister resubmitted the same list of names on 7 October and requested the President to disclose the evidence that he had against those he was unwilling to appoint.

7. Former President Obasanjo returned to Bissau on 9 to 11 October to pursue consultations with political stakeholders. On 12 October, my Special Representative for Guinea-Bissau and Head of UNIOGBIS met several times separately with President Vaz and Prime Minister Correia in an effort to assist the two leaders in reconciling their views regarding the nominees to lead the Ministries of Natural Resources and Internal Administration. Later the same day, President Vaz appointed

the new Cabinet members while assigning the two contested portfolios, ad interim, to the Prime Minister.

8. The new Government, which comprises 16 Ministers (including five women) and 13 Secretaries of State (including three women), was sworn in on 13 October. In addition to the PAIGC members, the Government includes the three minor political parties represented in the National Assembly. Negotiations to bring PRS into the Government were unsuccessful.

9. On 20 November, the PAIGC National Council of Jurisdiction expelled Baciro Djá from the Party for allegedly having breached its rules and regulations by accepting the post of Prime Minister in August. Three other PAIGC officials who were members of Mr. Djá's Government were suspended for four years for the same reason. Mr. Djá's subsequent appeal was rejected by the Regional Court of Bissau on 22 December. Also on 20 November, President Vaz dismissed the Prosecutor General, Hermenegildo Pereira, and the President of the Court of Auditors, Vasco Biaguê, replacing them with António Sedja Man and Dionisio Cabi, both PRS members. The outgoing officials, who are PAIGC members, were widely recognized as strong advocates of the independence of the judiciary during their tenures.

10. The tense political climate adversely affected the first ordinary session of the National Assembly, which began on 23 November. Following a week of heated debate, the National Assembly approved its working agenda on 30 November, by 55 votes in favour, including 51 votes of PAIGC members.

11. On 16 and 17 December, President Vaz attended the forty-eighth ordinary session of the Authority of Heads of State and Government of ECOWAS, held in Abuja. In its final communiqué, the Authority underscored the need for dialogue to consolidate peace and democracy in Guinea-Bissau and reiterated its appeal to national authorities to expedite the review of the country's Constitution. The Authority also instructed the President of the Commission of ECOWAS to take the measures necessary to organize a meeting of the International Contact Group on Guinea-Bissau, in consultation with other stakeholders, and renewed its appeal to ECOWAS bilateral and multilateral partners to provide financial support to ECOMIB.

12. From 21 to 23 December, the National Assembly discussed the Government's programme. At the end of the discussions, a vote was taken. Out of the 101 parliamentarians present, 45 voted in favour, while 56, including all 41 PRS members and 15 PAIGC members, abstained. The Bureau of the National Assembly met on 29 December to discuss the outcome of the vote in response to a request by PAIGC. The Bureau adopted a resolution in which it stated that it would abstain from providing a technical and legal interpretation of the vote, noting that such an interpretation would not be consensual. It added that it would favour political negotiations, especially between PAIGC and PRS, to avoid a situation of political and social chaos should the political and partisan dispute continue.

13. On 14 January, the PAIGC National Council of Jurisdiction expelled 14 Members of Parliament who had abstained from voting on the Government's programme and replaced them with new PAIGC Members. Former Prime Minister Baciro Djá, who was also one of the PAIGC Members who had abstained from voting, had been previously expelled from the Party, on 20 November. On 15 January, the Permanent Commission of the National Assembly removed the

parliamentary mandate of the 15 PAIGC Members of Parliament. On 18 January, the 15 Members of Parliament disrupted proceedings in the National Assembly, causing the Speaker to suspend the session and postpone the vote until 19 January. However, the expelled Members of Parliament remained in the National Assembly and, joining the opposition PRS, elected a new Speaker in contravention of existing Assembly statutes.

14. On 25 January, PAIGC, the National Unity Party, the Union for Change, the Democratic Convergence Party and the Patriotic Movement held a press conference during which they presented an open letter to the citizenry and international partners. In the letter, they accused the 15 expelled Members of Parliament and some members of PRS of several crimes, including impersonation, trespassing, attempting to carry out a coup d'état and breaches of constitutional order and the rule of law. The five parties also filed criminal cases against the dissident parliamentary group for those crimes. In apparent reference to the questioning earlier that day of the Ministers of Finance and of Women, Family and Social Cohesion by the Office of the Prosecutor General about the alleged misallocation of subsidies for health treatment to public servants in 2015, they also cautioned against the conduct of a judicial "witch hunt" by national authorities.

15. On the same day, President Vaz launched a series of consultations with national stakeholders, including civil society organizations, political parties, the Vice-President of the National Assembly, the Prime Minister, traditional and religious leaders and the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court. The President also held a meeting with the international community on 29 January at which he acknowledged the institutional impasse within the National Assembly and reiterated that he had no intention of dissolving it.

16. On 27 January, the Regional Court of Bissau approved an injunction requested by the Speaker of the National Assembly against the PRS parliamentary group and the 15 expelled Members of Parliament. The Court also requested them to respect the decision of the Permanent Commission of the National Assembly to remove the parliamentary mandate of the 15 Members of Parliament and urged them to refrain from any action that could endanger the physical integrity of the other Members of Parliament and the citizenry in general.

17. On 28 January, a collective of 21 political parties "without representation in Parliament" held a press conference in Bissau in support of the 15 expelled Members of Parliament, during which they urged President Vaz to dismiss the Government.

18. On the same day, the National Assembly approved the Government's programme with a majority of 59 out of 102 votes. PRS boycotted the session. Shortly after the announcement of the approval of the programme, the Office of the President issued a communiqué indicating the President's surprise that the vote on the programme had taken place while he was still consulting with national stakeholders. The communiqué also indicated that the President would, however, continue his consultations.

19. President Vaz invited the United Nations, the African Union, ECOWAS, the Community of Portuguese-speaking Countries and the European Union to participate in a meeting that he had convened on 1 and 2 February with key national stakeholders involved in the political crisis.

20. In a letter to President Vaz issued on 2 February, the PAIGC leader, Mr. Simões Pereira, requested that the format of the meetings convened by the President be changed to include only the "competent and legitimate" institutions of the Republic. Mr. Simões Pereira also expressed the Party's availability to contribute to a "frank and constructive" dialogue among political parties, civil society organizations and sovereign institutions towards a stability pact to be implemented through the current legislature. Finally, he welcomed the presence of international partners in the dialogue process.

B. Security situation

21. In spite of the political uncertainties, the overall security situation in the country remained stable during the reporting period. In an effort to address increased organized crime, drug trafficking and armed robbery during the peak of the political crisis, the Ministry of the Interior activated an ad hoc security plan that involved the conduct of regular joint police and military patrols. The plan was deactivated in early January. Furthermore, ECOMIB, in accordance with its mandate, reinforced the security arrangements for the protection of State institutions in response to possible threats posed by the political crisis.

22. On 12 August, the Superior Military Tribunal opened a new case against Rear Admiral José Zamora Induta in connection with his alleged participation in the events of 21 October 2012 at the Bissalanca air force base, in which armed assailants had reportedly launched an attack on the base. Mr. Induta was accused of homicide, terrorism and the subversion of constitutional order and placed under house arrest. On 22 September, he was transferred to a detention cell in the military camp at Mansôa, in the Oio region. On 11 November, the Supreme Court of Justice approved a request for habeas corpus filed by his lawyers. The Rear Admiral was released from detention but remained under house arrest. On 16 December, the Superior Military Tribunal removed all coercive measures that it had imposed on Mr. Induta and declined a new request by the military prosecution to make him a suspect in the case surrounding the events of 21 October 2012.

23. Between 9 and 11 September, the Chief of General Staff of the Armed Forces of Guinea-Bissau, Lieutenant-General Biaguê Na Ntan, attended the thirty-fifth ordinary meeting of the ECOWAS Committee of Chiefs of Defence Staff, held in Dakar. During the meeting, ECOWAS reported that it was still working to secure the resources needed for the envisaged demobilization of military and police officers. Participants agreed to propose that the special pension fund for the retirement of military and security officers be separated from the gratuity component for former freedom fighters, in order to facilitate a swifter launch of the demobilization process. On 22 October, following subsequent consultations with UNIOGBIS and other international partners, the Government announced that a separate bank account would be created for the gratuity. It also announced that it intended to renegotiate the memorandum of understanding signed with ECOWAS in November 2012 for the establishment of ECOMIB and for support in the area of security sector reform.

C. Human rights situation

24. During the reporting period, the human rights situation in Guinea-Bissau remained largely unchanged. Little progress was made in the investigation of past gross human rights violations or with respect to the creation of related accountability mechanisms. No progress was recorded in improving conditions in prisons and other detention facilities or in relation to protection from sexual and gender-based violence.

25. On 17 August, the Regional Court of Bissau found three Public Order Police officers and one National Guard agent guilty of beating a civilian to death. The latter had reportedly resisted arbitrary arrest on 20 September 2014 in Bissau. The Court sentenced all four suspects to 10 years in prison and a fine of CFAF 5 million to be paid to the victim's family. On 1 October, the defence appealed and the suspects were conditionally released on condition that they report periodically to the judicial authorities.

26. During the reporting period, UNIOGBIS advocated against the use of the media for political purposes, and for the public's right to accurate, objective and impartial information. Against the backdrop of growing political tensions, some media organizations used politicized language, which could be construed as falling under the definitions of "defamation" and "discrimination", which are criminalized under article 126 of the penal code of Guinea-Bissau. On 20 August, the National Assembly issued a note to the media appealing to them to scrupulously respect work ethics, avoid politicization, remain cognizant of the risk of being sued and report any violations of the right to freedom of expression and opinion to the Office of the Prosecutor General.

27. From 10 to 16 October, the Special Rapporteur of the Human Rights Council on the independence of judges and lawyers visited Guinea-Bissau to assess the independence and functioning of the justice system. In her preliminary observations, she noted that the population had little confidence in the formal justice system and that the working conditions and security measures in place for judges and prosecutors were inadequate. She observed that those deficits prevented access to adequate, timely and quality justice and undermined the independence of judges, prosecutors and lawyers. She also noted that access to justice was jeopardized by the absence of judges and prosecutors in many parts of the country and that that gap was being filled by traditional leaders, whose methods were often inconsistent with international human rights instruments ratified by Guinea-Bissau.

28. On 16 November, UNIOGBIS shared its regular report on the human rights situation in prisons and detention centres with the Minister of Justice, recommending that the Government take urgent measures to address overcrowding and illegal detention and to provide legal counsel and basic social services to inmates.

29. On 4 December, the newly appointed Prosecutor General ordered Guinea-Bissau National Radio and Television to suspend a weekly radio debate programme on political and social issues, citing the need to protect public order, peace, stability and institutional security. The next day, following a meeting with the Director of the broadcasting station, the Prosecutor General lifted the suspension of the programme.

D. Social, economic and humanitarian situation

30. Despite the political crisis, Guinea-Bissau is expected to have economic growth of 4.8 per cent in 2016, owing largely to increased revenues from cashew nut exports as a result of a favourable crop price (CFAF 400 per kilo in 2015, compared with CFAF 259 per kilo in 2014) and the increased effectiveness of Customs regulations to combat smuggling. Inflation remained low, with average quarterly price increases of just 0.2 per cent.

31. Food production decreased by 8 per cent in comparison with the previous five years. However, food availability remained adequate, owing mainly to the successful cashew nut campaign and favourable international prices. To reverse the trend of the poor harvest in the agricultural season of the previous year, the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, with the support of international partners, assisted farmers by providing agricultural inputs and pesticides and by promoting food-for-work activities.

32. During the reporting period, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and other international partners worked closely with the Ministry of Education to ensure a timely start of the 2015-2016 school year. Schools opened on 12 October despite the launch of a teachers' strike that partially disrupted lessons for approximately three weeks. In December, UNICEF completed the construction of 75 classrooms, bringing the total of improved classrooms in rural and remote communities to 130 in the past 12 months. This improved access to education for approximately 10,000 students.

33. As a result of emergency water chlorination support provided by UNICEF following a depletion of chlorine stocks at Bissau's public water system, the residents of Bissau continued to benefit from adequately treated water between July and September. The regular supply of chlorine by the authorities resumed in September.

34. On 24 November, with the support of UNICEF, the World Health Organization and the Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunization, the Ministry of Public Health successfully introduced the rotavirus vaccine into the national routine vaccination programme. More than 250 health workers received training at all levels of the health pyramid for the administration of the new vaccine. Supplementary vaccination campaigns against polio and measles, integrated with vitamin A supplementation and deworming with mebendazole, were carried out from October to December.

35. From August to December, the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) continued to provide support to improve maternal and neonatal health, through the donation of hospital equipment and medicine to the regions of Quinara, Tombali and Bolama. On 26 November, UNFPA and the Ministry of Public Health signed an agreement for the construction and rehabilitation of health facilities and maternity waiting homes in the three regions.

36. In December, the Ministry of Education completed two key policy documents, namely, the education sector analysis and the 10-year education strategic sector plan, with the support of UNICEF, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization and the Global Partnership for Education.

37. No cases of Ebola virus disease were registered in the country during the reporting period. In the meantime, the United Nations system continued to support the Government in strengthening its health surveillance and response system.

III. Status of implementation of the mandate of the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau

A. Inclusive political dialogue and national reconciliation process

38. On 29 October, UNIOGBIS and the Organizing Commission of the National Conference organized a meeting with 29 media representatives based in Bissau and the country's regions aimed at involving the media in the national dialogue process and providing them with basic information on the Commission's mandate. Following the meeting, at the request of the President of the Commission, UNIOGBIS and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) supported the holding of three workshops on the prevention of the use of hate speech by media professionals, in Bissau, São Domingos and Bafatá in November and December. Approximately 100 participants from local news agencies, community and commercial radio stations, State-owned media and the Offices of the President and the Prime Minister were trained.

39. From 20 November to 19 December, in response to a request by the Organizing Commission, a national consultant hired by UNIOGBIS consolidated all the working documents and preparatory reports produced and used by the Commission's predecessors. The consolidated document was made available to the Commission in late December. The document and the conclusions of the Commission will form the basis for the recommendations of the National Conference.

40. Notwithstanding those efforts, and owing in part to the ongoing political situation in Bissau, Government authorities have not convoked the Organizing Commission or met with its President.

B. Strategic and technical advice and support for national authorities in implementing the national security sector reform and rule of law strategies

41. As a result of the ongoing political stalemate in Bissau, demobilization efforts have not gathered momentum. During the reporting period, UNIOGBIS was not able to undertake a demobilization sensitization campaign as requested by the Government. In the interim, UNIOGBIS assisted the National Mixed Technical Independent Commission, led by the Ministry of Internal Administration, in reviewing the personnel selection criteria and police training strategy. UNIOGBIS also resumed the co-location of its police advisers at the model police station in the Bairro Militar area of Bissau.

42. During its consultations with the Minister of Defence and the military leadership, UNIOGBIS was assured that mechanisms were in place to absorb the $24 million required for pensioning off the first 500 military and police retirees.

However, they expressed concern at the delay in jump-starting the retirement of military and police officers through the special pension fund and the gratuity package. They requested the support of the international community in securing the funds needed to expeditiously implement the retirement programme.

43. Between 3 and 9 October, the UNIOGBIS regional office in Bafatá conducted capacity-building and mentoring workshops for Public Order Police and National Guard officers in the regions of Bafatá, Gabú, Biombo, Cacheu and Oio. The modules delivered to 17 officers, including three women, were focused on human resources, administration, criminal data and basic systems processing. From 24 to 26 November, the UNIOGBIS regional office in Bafatá led a workshop on criminal investigation, which targeted 14 police officers. The workshop was focused on the analysis of crime statistics and the mechanisms needed to differentiate serious crimes, as well as on community-oriented policing and its contribution to social stability and peace.

44. In November, UNICEF facilitated and supported the participation of one judge and three prosecutors in the first international course on juvenile justice for justice officials in countries of the Community of Portuguese-speaking Countries, held in Luanda. The course will contribute to national efforts to establish a juvenile justice system that conforms to the Convention on the Rights of the Child and other human rights standards.

45. From 24 to 26 November, UNIOGBIS held a three-day workshop in Bissau with national law enforcement and United Nations gender focal point counterparts on the development of standard operating procedures for the investigation of crimes against women, children and other vulnerable persons. On 4 December, UNIOGBIS concluded a 10-day workshop in Bissau on basic police training curriculum modules for both serving officers undergoing the certification process and future police recruits. On 8 December, UNIOGBIS conducted a 10-day workshop in Bissau for the development of standard operating procedures for regulating the conduct of police officers.

C. United Nations good offices

46. During the reporting period, which was marked by growing tensions among the sovereign organs of the State and within the main political party as a result of the dismissal of Prime Minister Simões Pereira, my Special Representative made full use of his good offices by undertaking, in close coordination with international partners, an intense cycle of consultations with key political figures and other national stakeholders. The consultations were aimed at creating an enabling environment for finding a peaceful solution to the ongoing political crisis through the promotion of confidence-building measures and meaningful dialogue. In particular, my Special Representative convened formal and informal meetings with international partners and key regional groupings (the African Union, the Community of Portuguese-speaking Countries, ECOWAS and the European Union) to forge a common understanding of the crisis and devise a coordinated strategy for preventing an escalation of tensions. While making full use of his good offices in engaging key national stakeholders — specifically, the President; the new Prime Minister, Carlos Correia; Mr. Simões Pereira, in his capacity as leader of PAIGC; and the Speaker of Parliament — my Special Representative stressed that political

differences should be resolved in an inclusive, collaborative and constructive way. He also continued to advocate the resumption of dialogue to reconcile differences and called on political actors to place the national interest above personal differences.

47. From 1 to 3 September, my Special Representative held consultations in Lisbon with the Portuguese authorities (the President, the Prime Minister, the Minister for Foreign Affairs and the Speaker of Parliament), as well as with the Executive Secretary of the Community of Portuguese-speaking Countries. He also met with the Prime Minister and the Minister for Foreign Affairs on 12 January. During those and other meetings, my Special Representative sought to keep Guinea-Bissau in the international spotlight with a view to encouraging material, technical and financial support from partners to help consolidate efforts aimed at political stabilization and sustainable socioeconomic development.

D. Support for the Government of Guinea-Bissau in the mobilization, harmonization and coordination of international assistance

48. My Special Representative continued to urge international partners to provide material, technical and financial support to Guinea-Bissau. Moreover, he continued to promote a coordinated international approach towards sustainable socioeconomic development.

49. My Special Representative worked with international partners in Bissau to forge a common understanding of the crisis and devise a coordinated strategy for preventing an escalation of tensions. In that context, he chaired the monthly meetings of international partners based in Bissau to facilitate information-sharing and coordinate messaging. At the meetings, international partners stressed the need for national stakeholders to uphold the Constitution and to engage in genuine inclusive dialogue aimed at promoting lasting political stability and intra-party cohesion.

50. From 1 to 3 September, my Special Representative held consultations in Lisbon with the President, Prime Minister, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Speaker of Parliament of Portugal, as well as with the Executive Secretary of the Community of Portuguese-speaking Countries. All interlocutors reaffirmed their readiness to assist Guinea-Bissau in resolving the political crisis. On 10 December, he met with the President of Côte d'Ivoire, Alassane Ouattara, in advance of the twenty-eighth high-level meeting of the heads of the United Nations peace missions in West Africa, held in Abidjan on 11 December. President Ouattara reiterated the calls of ECOWAS for international support for ECOMIB.

51. The United Nations system, through UNDP, is working with the Government and the European Union to establish effective mechanisms for aid coordination and follow-up on the pledges made at the March 2015 international partners' round table, which totalled approximately $1.3 billion. Since the pledges were made by international stakeholders, up to $150 million has been received from the World Bank, the International Fund for Agricultural Development, the Peacebuilding Fund, the African Development Bank, the West African Development Bank and Portugal.

E. Strengthening democratic institutions and enhancing the capacity of State organs to function effectively and constitutionally

52. From 30 October to 1 November, with the support of UNIOGBIS, the National Assembly ad hoc commission on constitutional reform held a retreat in Canchungo, in the Cacheu region, to officially launch its activities. Participants discussed the draft chronogram of the commission's activities through the end of 2016, as well as its terms of reference, internal regulations, communication strategy and draft budget. The commission was reconvened on 5 November to approve the documents.

53. On 4 November, UNIOGBIS hosted a meeting of the National Civil Society Movement for Peace, Democracy and Development and the platform of non-governmental organizations and local associations of Bafatá, to promote interaction between civil society and Members of Parliament. The meeting's participants, who included more than 35 representatives of civil society organizations, discussed issues related to justice, human rights and socioeconomic development, in particular infrastructure and transportation challenges in the region. A similar meeting was held in São Domingos on 10 November. Its 27 participants discussed the major socioeconomic issues affecting their region, including Customs tariffs on domestic products, land conflict, cattle-rustling, lack of access to basic services, and justice. Participants in both meetings selected five representatives who met with the National Assembly's specialized commission on social affairs on 11 and 18 December, respectively, to deliver their report. The report contained recommendations on how to address the challenges identified at the meetings and how to foster parliamentary interaction with constituents. The commission praised the initiative and pledged to reach out to Guinea-Bissau's constituents.

54. From 27 to 29 December, UNIOGBIS provided support for the holding of a training workshop on communications, advocacy and lobbying, simultaneously in the towns of Bafatá, Buba and São Domingos. The training was aimed at enhancing the capacity of civil society organizations to play a constructive role in Guinea-Bissau's democratic process and governance. Some 25 participants attended each of the workshops.

55. During the reporting period, UNDP worked with the National Assembly and the Court of Auditors to strengthen their capacity to provide oversight in the area of economic governance. It also supported the Ministry of the Economy and Finance in releasing the quarterly report on public finances in three regions (Quinara, Gabú and Cacheu), which were disseminated to local traditional authorities, religious and women's organizations, local elected officials and youth associations. UNDP also assisted the Ministry of Public Service, Labour and Modernization in creating and operationalizing a unit to monitor decentralization mechanisms and programmes so as to improve efficiency and transparency in public service.

56. On 18 December, with the support of UNIOGBIS, the National Institute of Studies and Research concluded a series of seven conferences initiated on 30 June in commemoration of its thirtieth anniversary. Some 500 participants from academia, the civil service, political parties, the diplomatic corps and the United Nations attended the conferences. Discussions were focused on, inter alia, structural challenges in the justice sector, border management, political stability and constitutional reform. The conferences were aimed at assisting the Institute with the resumption of initiatives to promote scientific debates and studies on the country's sociopolitical realities and to stimulate open dialogue.

F. Strategic and technical advice and support for the establishment of effective and efficient law enforcement and criminal justice and penitentiary systems

57. During the reporting period, the UNIOGBIS regional office in São Domingos continued to engage with local law enforcement agencies, regional authorities and civil society representatives in order to assess and make recommendations on ways to address increasing crime.

58. From 10 to 18 August, UNIOGBIS and UNDP facilitated meetings between a visiting expert mission of the Global Focal Point for Police, Justice and Corrections and Guinea-Bissau security sector reform and rule of law officers in Bissau and the regions. The main goal of the visit was to explore ways to improve overall coordination in relation to security sector reform and the rule of law, including United Nations joint programming. At the request of the Prosecutor General, UNIOGBIS undertook five working visits to his Office between September and November to provide technical assistance and advice in connection with pending investigations involving political and military actors.

59. UNIOGBIS supported the organization of the fifth annual National Forum on Criminal Justice, held from 2 to 4 December in Bissau. Approximately 70 senior officials discussed issues related to environmental crime, a national policy on criminal justice and the review of the draft military justice code. The main recommendations made by participants were: (a) protect the environment through the criminalization of such acts as illegal fishing, illegal trade in timber and the exploitation of protected areas; (b) establish a data-gathering system to measure criminality and to provide crime statistics; and (c) ensure the compliance of the military justice code with national and international standards.

60. On 10 and 11 November, UNIOGBIS conducted two sensitization sessions with senior officers of the military judiciary police, military magistrates and representatives of the Ministry of Defence at the National Defence Institute, in Bissau. Nineteen military magistrates, including two women, and 22 senior officers of the military judiciary police, one of whom one is a woman, participated in the event, which was focused on raising awareness of the principles governing the administration of justice by military tribunals.

61. On 26 November, the UNIOGBIS regional office in Buba supported local governance authorities in the region of Quinara in creating a regional consultative council. Fifty participants, including five women, comprising representatives of local administration and civil society organizations, community and religious leaders and security system representatives, discussed peace, security and development concerns of the region. The creation of the Council is expected to assist in curbing criminality and human rights violations and in fostering peace consolidation, public security and development.

62. UNDP continued to support the provision of free legal aid and conflict mediation services to the most vulnerable population, including women, through the Centres for Access to Justice in Bissau and the regions of Cacheu, Oio and Bafatá. The Judicial Training Centre, supported by UNDP, continued to provide training to 196 magistrates and justice officers.

G. Promotion and protection of human rights and human rights monitoring and reporting activities

63. Despite intense lobbying by UNIOGBIS, efforts to review the status of the country's National Human Rights Commission to make it compliant with the Paris Principles have been delayed. This, in turn, has affected the activities of the interministerial committee to implement the recommendations of the universal periodic review of the Human Rights Council and those of other human rights bodies. In addition, as a result of the political instability in Bissau, UNIOGBIS has not succeeded in supporting the Government in moving forward with its national human rights action plan.

64. UNIOGBIS supported national authorities in facilitating a workshop held from 27 to 28 October on impunity. The workshop was a follow-up to the first National Conference on Impunity, Justice and Human Rights, held in 2013 within the framework of the 2011 Bamako Declaration and Strategic Framework on Impunity, Justice and Human Rights. Fifty participants from the justice, defence and security sectors, the civil service, the National Assembly, political parties and civil society organizations developed a national action plan consisting of strategies and mechanisms for addressing impunity, ensuring effective and accessible justice and promoting and protecting human rights.

65. At the request of the Ministry of Education, UNIOGBIS delivered human rights training for 50 secondary school teachers, including 10 women, in the regions of Bafatá and Gabú in November and December, respectively. On 4 December, UNIOGBIS supported the Faculty of Law of Amilcar Cabral University in delivering a conference on the fiftieth anniversary of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, to ensure that law students become familiar with those international instruments and support their implementation.

66. From 30 November to 5 December, UNIOGBIS disseminated laws against female genital mutilation, human trafficking and domestic violence during a training course conducted in Farim, in the Oio region, for 60 members of local civil society, including 41 women. During the reporting period, UNICEF and UNFPA continued to work in a concerted manner with the National Committee for the Abandonment of Harmful Practices to support national strategies aimed at the cessation of female genital mutilation/cutting.

67. In the context of the International Human Rights Day celebrations on 10 December, UNIOGBIS facilitated, alongside the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women, a programme of activities in the regions of Gabú, Bafatá, Oio, Quinara and Bissau in support of the "16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence" campaign. The programme, led by the Ministry of Women, Family and Social Cohesion, consisted of training for schoolchildren, lectures at the Faculty of Law and secondary schools, marches, and human rights concerts for prisoners and detainees in all penitentiary facilities. The international community also supported a group of civil society organizations in holding a "Human Rights Fortnight" at Casa dos Direitos (House of Rights), a locally run human rights resource centre in Bissau, which included a series of cultural events.

68. UNIOGBIS, UNDP and UNICEF also continued to strengthen the capacity of the judiciary and law enforcement officials, as well as the military, in the area of human rights. UNICEF technical and material support for the National Guard, non-governmental organizations and the National Committee against Trafficking in Persons resulted in the interception of 31 separated children at various border points in the Gabú and Tombali regions during the reporting period. In addition, the ongoing joint operations between the National Guard and child protection civil society organizations resulted in the repatriation and reintegration into Guinea-Bissau of 39 children, commonly referred to as *talibés*, from the Gambia and Senegal.

69. UNIOGBIS delivered human rights training to 60 members of the judiciary and 30 military trainers of trainers, focusing on the integration of human rights into the administration of justice, as well as on the training curriculum of the armed forces.

H. Strategic and technical advice and support for the Government of Guinea-Bissau to combat drug trafficking and transnational organized crime

70. From 10 to 21 August, UNIOGBIS, in coordination with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and the International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL), assisted the Public Order Police, the National Guard, the military judiciary police and local prosecutors in implementing "Operation Padlock II". The operation was aimed at monitoring incoming and outgoing persons and goods through the border-crossing points in the eastern and southern regions of Guinea-Bissau, using the Mobile INTERPOL Network Database (MIND).

71. On 21 August, the transnational organized crime units of Guinea-Bissau, Liberia and Sierra Leone participated in a UNODC-coordinated regional workshop in Dakar to share their respective countries' organizational structure, operational challenges and lessons learned. The second inter-agency protocol for collaboration and joint intelligence, investigation and interdiction operations relating to drug and psychotropic substances was signed during the workshop.

72. The West Africa Coast Initiative Policy Committee met in Bissau on 24 November under the co-chairmanship of my Special Representative for Guinea-Bissau and my Special Representative for West Africa and Head of the United Nations Office for West Africa (UNOWA), with the participation of 40 high-level international representatives and United Nations officials, including the Ministers of the Interior of Guinea and Sierra Leone as well as the Attorney General of Liberia. Participants acknowledged and expressed support for the Guinea-Bissau authorities for their efforts to fight transnational organized crime since the return to constitutional order in 2014. The Policy Committee took stock of the progress made in the implementation of the Initiative, discussed solutions for countries where implementation levels remained low and agreed on new strategic orientations for the extension of the Initiative programme until 2017. The Committee reasserted its support for the implementation of the ECOWAS Regional Action Plan to Address the Growing Problem of Illicit Drug Trafficking, Organized Crime and Drug Abuse in West Africa (2008-2015). At the conclusion of the meeting, members of the Committee also reaffirmed their continuous commitment to implementing the

Initiative programme, including through strategic coordination at the national, regional and international levels.

73. On 30 November and 1 December, with the support of UNIOGBIS, the Ministers of Defence and Justice co-chaired a seminar organized by the National Defence Institute aimed at discussing transnational organized crime, including drug trafficking, and its negative impact on stability and governance in Guinea-Bissau and the subregion.

74. On the same day, UNODC, in cooperation with UNIOGBIS, initiated a training-of-trainers course on trafficking in persons in Bissau. The course, which concluded on 4 December, was a joint initiative between UNODC and the Community of Portuguese-speaking Countries, with the participation of the Portuguese Observatory on Trafficking in Human Beings.

75. On 11 December, UNIOGBIS reopened its regional office on Bubaque Island, in the Bijagós archipelago, which will, inter alia, support efforts to assist national authorities in monitoring drug activities and transnational organized crime. Two officers have been deployed to the office.

I. Incorporating a gender perspective into peacebuilding, in line with Security Council resolutions 1325 (2000) and 1820 (2008)

76. In collaboration with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and the Women's Political Platform, UNIOGBIS organized two training workshops on land law and conflict resolution, in Bolama, in the Quinará region, on 15 and 16 August and in Quinhamel, in the Biombo region, on 21 and 22 August. The workshops were aimed at strengthening the capacity of women leaders and civil society with respect to land law, gender equality, community dialogue, gender-based violence and conflict resolution.

77. From 23 to 24 October, UNIOGBIS held a training workshop on gender equality and security sector reform in Canchungo, in the Cacheu region, in collaboration with two women's committees established within the defence and security institutions. Thirty-five women from the navy, the army, the air force, the National Guard and the Public Order Police took part in the training, aimed at strengthening participants' capacity to promote and protect women's rights under Security Council resolution 1325 (2000). Participants expressed their concern regarding gender inequality within the armed forces and security institutions.

78. On 23 and 24 November, the National Assembly specialized commission on women and children and the National Network of Women in Parliament organized a workshop in Bissau to validate a bill of law on quotas for women to promote women's participation in decision-making processes. Participants agreed on the need to further improve the bill, which, once fully validated, will be submitted to the National Assembly for approval.

79. From 16 to 19 December, UNIOGBIS supported the organization of a training workshop for women's civil society organizations and women leaders on communication, advocacy and lobbying, in response to a request by the women's parliamentary caucus.

J. Work with the Peacebuilding Commission in support of Guinea-Bissau's peacebuilding priorities

80. On 21 October, the Peacebuilding Commission's country-specific configuration for Guinea-Bissau held an informal meeting to review the political and economic situation in the aftermath of the political crisis in the country. The newly appointed Minister for Foreign Affairs, Artur Silva, participated in the meeting from Bissau. The Minister briefed the configuration on the Government's priorities and provided assurances with respect to the authorities' political will and commitment to restore stability in Guinea-Bissau.

81. In a statement issued on 26 October, the configuration encouraged national stakeholders to address the country's governance difficulties through political inclusivity and commitment to rebuild the momentum for progress in key areas such as the security sector and the "Terra Ranka" development programme presented to the donor community at the round table in March 2015. On 16 December, the configuration issued another statement, urging the political leadership to rise to the country's historic opportunity to break the cycle of instability and poverty.

IV. Cross-cutting issues

A. Integration of the United Nations system

82. The Guinea-Bissau-United Nations Partnership Framework for the period 2016-2020, in support of the implementation of the national strategic and operational plan for the period 2015-2020 ("Terra Ranka"), has been finalized and is awaiting signature by the Government. The estimated budget for the Partnership Framework amounts to approximately $381 million, including $10 million from the Peacebuilding Fund. A coordination mechanism for its implementation has been discussed and agreed upon with national authorities. A joint action plan for its implementation is expected to be finalized and adopted in the first quarter of 2016.

83. On 16 November, my Special Representative convened the third meeting of the United Nations Strategic Policy Group to jointly review contributions from the United Nations system towards the implementation of the mandate of UNIOGBIS. Members of the Group also examined the mechanisms for coordination, monitoring and evaluation between the Government of Guinea-Bissau and the United Nations, as part of the United Nations Partnership Framework.

84. In accordance with the findings of a working-level visit to Bissau led by the Department of Political Affairs from 15 to 17 December, I have requested UNIOGBIS and the United Nations country team to support the development of a national strategy and joint rule of law programme within the framework of the Global Focal Point for Police, Justice and Corrections and to foster greater integration by realizing opportunities for synergy and collaboration in the areas of reconciliation and constitutional reform.

B. Public information

85. During the reporting period, UNIOGBIS produced 25 radio programmes in the Creole and Portuguese languages, which were broadcast on two national radio stations. The programmes were focused on human rights and gender issues, sustainable development, peace and security, justice and humanitarian affairs, the rule of law and the national reconciliation process. UNIOGBIS assisted the Organizing Commission of the National Conference and the ad hoc commission on constitutional reform in developing their respective communication strategies and preparing their first communication activities.

86. As Chair of the United Nations Communications Group, UNIOGBIS led the organization of a wide range of activities to mark the seventieth anniversary of the United Nations, such as lectures on the United Nations at Amilcar Cabral University, Lusophone University and secondary schools, a special parliamentary session on United Nations Day on 24 October, a concert and a photo exhibition on the Sustainable Development Goals and the work of the Organization in Guinea-Bissau.

87. Notwithstanding planned activities in the field of public information, owing to the current political situation UNIOGBIS delayed joint work with the Ministry of Social Communication on the media forum and adjustments to the national policy for the media sector. In addition, the non-signature of the United Nations Partnership Framework has negatively affected the UNIOGBIS communication strategy and associated coordination mechanisms.

C. Staff safety and security

88. The overall security situation remained relatively calm throughout the country during the reporting period. Four incidents of petty crime and three minor non-fatal traffic accidents involving United Nations staff members were reported. In response to continued reports regarding terrorist threats in the subregion, preventive measures were put in place at UNIOGBIS and United Nations House, and staff members were reminded to be vigilant.

V. Observations

89. The political crisis within the main political party, PAIGC, and among the political leadership in Guinea-Bissau, which has prevented the country from moving forward with its national reform agenda for more than six months, is concerning. The current stagnation undermines the bright outlook for the country following the successful partners' round table in March, during which international partners expressed unprecedented support for the country's strategic and operational plan for the period 2015-2020. The crisis has the potential to further damage the already fragile State institutions and the overall peacebuilding process.

90. In such a context, it is the people of Guinea-Bissau who are failing to reap the dividends promised to them by their democratically elected Government. They have yet to see tangible improvements in their socioeconomic situations. I appeal to the leaders of Guinea-Bissau, including the President, the Prime Minister, the Speaker

of Parliament and heads of political parties, to follow through on their commitment to bring political stability to Guinea-Bissau in the interests of their nation.

91. I commend Guinea-Bissau's regional and international partners, in particular ECOWAS, the African Union, the Community of Portuguese-speaking Countries, the European Union and bilateral partners, which, along with the United Nations, have remained steadfast in investing time and resources in supporting the people of Guinea-Bissau in their quest to attain sustainable peace and stability. I also wish to recognize the important and salutary role played by ECOMIB and urge Member States to consider providing financial assistance to support ECOWAS in sustaining the deployment of the Mission.

92. I note with satisfaction that the armed forces have remained in their barracks and have not interfered in the political affairs of the country. I encourage national authorities with responsibility and command over that sector to intensify efforts, within their capacities, to advance the implementation of security sector reform, including its retirement and reintegration aspects. I hope that bilateral, regional and international partners will provide the financial and technical support needed to move this process forward. I also call on the Government to operationalize as soon as possible the coordination mechanisms for pledge disbursement and monitoring, in cooperation with partners. The United Nations remains available to provide technical assistance in that regard.

93. I equally appeal to the National Assembly, the ad hoc Commission on Constitutional Reform and the Organizing Commission of the National Conference to accelerate their work while making the best use of the technical expertise provided by the United Nations. Likewise, United Nations support will continue to be available, upon request and where appropriate, for other initiatives aimed at enhancing stability in Guinea-Bissau, including the formulation of a stability pact.

94. I remain concerned about the continued fragility of Guinea-Bissau's criminal justice system and the lack of progress in the investigation of, and in establishing accountability mechanisms for, gross human rights violations. I reiterate my calls to national authorities to implement the justice reform plans, the national plan to address transnational organized crime, and the recommendations made in the Human Rights Council's universal periodic review of Guinea-Bissau in January 2015. I also encourage national authorities to finalize the ratification of all pending human rights instruments.

95. The mandate of UNIOGBIS expires on 28 February, but much work remains to be done, including in support of efforts to find a sustainable solution to the ongoing political crisis. I therefore recommend that the current mandate of UNIOGBIS be extended for another year, until 28 February 2017.

96. To conclude, I wish to express my appreciation to my Special Representative, Miguel Trovoada, and to the staff of UNIOGBIS and the United Nations country team under his leadership, as well as to bilateral, regional and international partners, for their continuing contributions to peacebuilding in Guinea-Bissau.

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Security Council

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Letter dated 12 February 2016 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council

I have the honour to convey herewith the first report of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons-United Nations Joint Investigative Mechanism (see annex).

I would be grateful if the present letter and its annex could be brought to the attention of the members of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) **BAN** Ki-moon

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Annex

Letter of transmittal

The Leadership Panel of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons-United Nations Joint Investigative Mechanism has the honour to transmit the Mechanism's first report pursuant to Security Council resolution 2235 (2015) (see enclosure).

The report provides an overview of the work of the Mechanism to date, the sources of information available to it and the methodological considerations behind its investigative strategy. It also outlines the steps it will undertake in the next phase, during which case-by-case investigation will be undertaken, with the aim of identifying to the greatest extent feasible individuals, entities, groups or Governments who were perpetrators, organizers, sponsors or otherwise involved in the use of chemicals as weapons, including chlorine or any other toxic chemical, in the Syrian Arab Republic.

(*Signed*) Virginia **Gamba**
Head
Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons-
United Nations Joint Investigative Mechanism

(*Signed*) Adrian **Neritani**
Leadership Panel

(*Signed*) Eberhard **Schanze**
Leadership Panel

Enclosure

First report of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons-United Nations Joint Investigative Mechanism

I. Introduction

1. The present report is submitted pursuant to paragraph 11 of Security Council resolution 2235 (2015). The reporting period covers the activities of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW)-United Nations Joint Investigative Mechanism (hereinafter "the Mechanism") to identify to the greatest extent feasible individuals, entities, groups or Governments who were perpetrators, organizers, sponsors or otherwise involved in the use of chemicals as weapons, including chlorine or any other toxic chemical, in the Syrian Arab Republic from 24 September 2015, when the present mandate of the Mechanism commenced, until 10 February 2016.

II. Background

2. The Security Council, in its resolutions 2118 (2013) and 2209 (2015), condemned in the strongest terms the use of any toxic chemical as a weapon in the Syrian Arab Republic, affirmed that the use of chemical weapons constituted a serious violation of international law and stressed that those responsible for the use of such weapons must be held accountable. On 7 August 2015, the Council unanimously adopted resolution 2235 (2015), by which the Mechanism was established for a period of one year with the possibility of extension, if the Council deems it necessary.

3. The Mechanism was mandated to identify to the greatest extent feasible individuals, entities, groups or Governments who were perpetrators, organizers, sponsors or otherwise involved in the use of chemicals as weapons, including chlorine or any other toxic chemical, in the Syrian Arab Republic where the OPCW fact-finding mission determines or has determined that a specific incident in the Syrian Arab Republic involved or likely involved the use of chemicals as weapons, including chlorine or any other toxic chemical.

4. In accordance with paragraph 5 of resolution 2235 (2015), the United Nations Secretary-General, in coordination with the Director General of OPCW, submitted a letter to the President of the Security Council dated 27 August (S/2015/669) with recommendations, including elements of terms of reference, regarding the establishment and operation of the Mechanism. A second letter to the President of the Security Council, dated 9 September (S/2015/696), was submitted upon a request for further clarification on the terms of reference of the Mechanism. The Security Council authorized these recommendations, as conveyed by the President of the Security Council in his letter to the Secretary-General dated 10 September (S/2015/697).

5. On 15 September, the President of the Security Council informed the Secretary-General (see S/2015/710) that the members of the Security Council took note of the intention expressed in the Secretary-General's letter dated 11 September (S/2015/709) to appoint Virginia Gamba (Argentina) as head of the independent

three-member leadership panel to be set up to lead the Mechanism. On 24 September, the Secretary-General, in coordination with the Director General of OPCW, appointed Adrian Neritani (Albania) and Eberhard Schanze (Germany) as the remaining two members of the Leadership Panel, who also act as deputies to the Head of the Mechanism and are responsible for its political and investigation components, respectively.

Activities of the Mechanism

6. On 1 and 2 October, the Leadership Panel held a planning meeting in New York, with the participation of representatives of the United Nations Secretariat, the Technical Secretariat of OPCW and the secretariats of relevant expert organizations, such as the World Health Organization and the International Criminal Police Organization, to discuss the setting-up and operationalization of the Mechanism. The participants identified key tasks and roles, including the support required by the Mechanism, and the personnel profiles and skill sets required in the Mechanism. On the basis of the proceedings of the meeting, the Panel decided on the priorities and the immediate next steps regarding the methods of work.

7. The Leadership Panel proceeded to recruit its core staff, grouped into three components: a political office based in New York providing political analysis, legal advice, media relations and information management; an investigative office based in The Hague providing chemical and medical analysis, forensics, military ordnance analysis and other relevant information analysis; and a planning and operations support office based in New York providing support to the Panel and the political and investigative components.

8. The Leadership Panel took great care to ensure that impartial and experienced staff with relevant skills and expertise were recruited in accordance with the elements proposed by the Secretary-General in his letters to the President of the Security Council (S/2015/669 and S/2015/697). In addition, the Panel paid due regard to the importance of recruiting staff on as wide a geographical basis as was practicable, in accordance with paragraph 6 of resolution 2235 (2015).

9. Steps were taken to ensure that the Mechanism's requirements regarding the integrity and confidentiality of its work, including the protection of documents and evidence, were met. In this connection, it was necessary to obtain office space that satisfied such requirements, including secure communications and information management, for all the components of the Mechanism. As a result, adequate office space that conformed to those requirements was identified at United Nations Headquarters for the Leadership Panel and the Mechanism's political and support components. In addition, a lease arrangement was concluded with OPCW for the space occupied by the Mechanism's investigative component in The Hague. In this regard, an agreement concerning the status of its investigative office is under discussion with the Government of the Netherlands.

10. The establishment of a "light footprint" in Damascus remains a matter of priority for the Leadership Panel, and discussions are ongoing regarding possible arrangements.

11. The Mechanism's personnel costs and basic start-up activities were funded for the first three months under the commitment authority of the Secretary-General pursuant to the provisions of General Assembly resolution 68/249, on unforeseen

and extraordinary expenses for the biennium 2014-2015. As at 1 January 2016, the Mechanism was funded through the regular budget of the United Nations, as approved by the General Assembly in its resolution 70/248.

12. Given that voluntary contributions were required to support the Mechanism's activities, the Security Council authorized the establishment of a trust fund by the Secretary-General to address the material and technical needs of the Mechanism, including additional expertise and activities as requirements emerge. Generous contributions have been received to date, a sign of the importance given to the Mechanism's mandate.

13. In accordance with paragraph 10 of resolution 2235 (2015), the Secretary-General, in his letter to the President of the Security Council dated 9 November (S/2015/854), informed the Council that the Mechanism would begin its full operations on 13 November.

III. Methodological considerations

14. The Leadership Panel noted that there were no precedents for the investigation into the identification of the perpetrators, organizers, sponsors or those otherwise involved in the use of chemicals as weapons, unlike the Secretary-General's Mechanism for Investigation of Alleged Use of Chemical and Biological Weapons, for which there are guidelines and procedures (see A/44/561). Accordingly, the Panel decided that, before the conclusion of the Mechanism's mandate to identify those involved in the use of chemicals as weapons, operating guidelines and procedures for investigating those involved in the use of chemicals as weapons will be submitted to the Security Council.

15. The Mechanism is not mandated to act and function as a judicial or quasi-judicial body. Moreover, it does not have any authority or jurisdiction, either directly or indirectly, to make a formal or binding judicial determination of criminal liability. Accordingly, the Mechanism will function as a non-judicial investigative mechanism within its mandate, identifying "to the greatest extent feasible" individuals and other actors involved in the use of chemicals as weapons and the roles that they played.

16. The Mechanism's work is bound by the principles of impartiality, objectivity and independence. Its work will be undertaken in a confidential manner. All information and evidence considered by the Mechanism will be subject to assessment through verification and substantiation. An opportunity to review, comment and respond will be given, if appropriate, to those that the Leadership Panel may identify.

17. The Leadership Panel held several workshops, conducted comparative studies and reviewed those methods of work adopted by international investigations and sanctions bodies.

18. Further to those studies and consultations, the Leadership Panel developed methods of work on the conduct of its investigations, including the collection of evidence and other related information, as well as the analysis, verification and corroboration of information, and the establishment of appropriate structures for the protection and management of information, as outlined below.

19. The Mechanism will investigate and attempt to identify each category of perpetrator, sponsor, organizer or those otherwise involved in the use of chemicals as weapons. It will also seek to determine whether it was incumbent on those in leadership positions to take necessary and reasonable measures to prevent the use of chemicals as weapons.

20. The Leadership Panel decided that, in reporting its findings to the Security Council, a sufficient degree of supporting evidence was required, i.e., there is evidence of a credible and reliable nature to determine that a party was involved in the use of chemicals as weapons. In indicating the amount of supporting evidence, the Panel will be guided by the following standards:

(a) Overwhelming evidence (highly convincing evidence to support a finding);

(b) Substantial evidence (very solid evidence to support a finding); or

(c) Sufficient evidence (there is evidence of a credible and reliable nature for the Mechanism to make a finding that a party was involved in the use of chemicals as weapons).

21. The report(s) will contain a narrative of the incidents and a summary of the information and evidence collected. In addition, it will detail the findings, including the amount of evidence that was assessed and, whenever possible, the strength of its findings, and a conclusion.

22. Where the Leadership Panel determines that there is insufficient evidence in relation to an incident investigated by the Mechanism, it will report accordingly to the Security Council.

23. The Mechanism developed and implemented, as a first step, a records management system within a robust information security regime applicable to all information obtained or generated by the Mechanism in the conduct of its work. The regime takes into account the confidentiality and security requirements deemed necessary for the storage and use of information and evidence provided to the Mechanism, including those provided by OPCW. Access to information by members of the Mechanism is on a need-to-know basis, and access rights are determined by the Head of the Mechanism. All personnel of the Mechanism have signed an undertaking agreeing not to disclose any confidential information obtained through the course of their work for the Mechanism and have been trained on information security.

24. The Leadership Panel decided that the implementation of the Mechanism would be undertaken in the following phases:

(a) Phase I: information collection and planning for case development, which commenced when the Mechanism began its full operations on 13 November. This phase consists of reviewing and analysing the fact-finding mission data, mapping the incidents, and elaborating an investigation plan and methodology, including evidentiary standards and relevant procedures. Furthermore, this phase includes the collection of relevant non-fact-finding mission information and the provision of appropriate training to its personnel, including for field deployments. This phase is scheduled to conclude at the end of February 2016;

(b) Phase II: case investigation, which will consist of in-depth analysis of the cases identified during phase I. This phase will commence in March 2016 and will

include performing detailed analysis of the information obtained, conducting field visits and witness interviews as necessary, and obtaining case-relevant information from Member States and others. This stage will continue until sufficient information and evidence are gathered to allow the Mechanism to report its findings to the Security Council. In addition, the Leadership Panel will submit to the Council the operational guidelines and procedures for the Mechanism to identify those involved in the use of chemicals as weapons.

IV. Activities during Phase I

Sources of information

25. In accordance with the relevant provisions of resolution 2235 (2015), the Leadership Panel decided to base the Mechanism's work on the following sources of information:

(a) Information and evidence obtained or prepared by the fact-finding mission, including but not limited to medical records, interview tapes and transcripts, and documentary material;

(b) Additional information and evidence that was not obtained or prepared by the fact-finding mission but is deemed to be related to the mandate of the Mechanism (non-fact-finding mission sources), including information received from, inter alia, the following:

(i) The Syrian Arab Republic and all parties in the Syrian Arab Republic;

(ii) Other States Members of the United Nations;

(iii) Individual groups or entities with relevant information; and

(iv) Open sources.

26. The Mechanism considers the starting point of the investigation to stem from the fact-finding mission information. Accordingly, priority has been given to reviewing information obtained from the fact-finding mission. In addition, the Leadership Panel has sought and received information from the Syrian Arab Republic and other States, which have agreed to cooperate and provide information in accordance with resolution 2235 (2015). It hopes to receive information from various other sources, including parties in the Syrian Arab Republic. It is also reviewing information contained in open sources and is seeking, where necessary, the assistance within the United Nations and OPCW to obtain access to the necessary material.

Information and evidence obtained or prepared by the fact-finding mission

27. The United Nations and OPCW concluded on 20 November a supplementary arrangement concerning the implementation of resolution 2235 (2015) pursuant to the Agreement concerning the Relationship between the United Nations and the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, concluded in 2001. The arrangement sets out the modalities of cooperation between the two organizations to allow for the speedy establishment and full functioning of the Mechanism.

28. In addition, a memorandum of understanding was concluded between the Mechanism and OPCW on 26 November 2015, concerning the provision of access,

storage and handling of information, including evidence, obtained by the fact-finding mission and the Mechanism. It outlines the procedures for the safe and confidential exchange and retention of information referenced in paragraphs 9 and 12 of resolution 2235 (2015), including through the application of the rules and regulations of OPCW and the United Nations governing the protection, control and release of classified information.

29. On the basis of these arrangements, the Mechanism's investigation commenced in December with the review and analysis of the information and the evidence obtained from the fact-finding mission. OPCW provided, and continues to provide, the Mechanism with fact-finding mission information and evidence pursuant to the memorandum of understanding concluded on 26 November. Additional information was obtained through discussions with the heads and the team members of the fact-finding mission. The fact-finding mission information was reviewed "as is", without discrimination as to the veracity of its sources or any methodology or method of work adopted by the fact-finding mission.

Non-fact-finding mission information

30. In resolution 2235 (2015), the Security Council called on all other States to fully cooperate with the Mechanism through the provision of any relevant information that may assist the Mechanism in fulfilling its mandate. After consultations with Member States, the Head of the Mechanism addressed two formal requests for information, dated 8 December 2015 and 5 January 2016, to the Syrian Arab Republic as well as to neighbouring and other States. The requests included questions related to, inter alia, principal infrastructure and facilities; demographic data; the disposition of armed forces (the forces of the Syrian Arab Republic, armed opposition groups and terrorist groups) and the possession of military equipment; and flight operations. In response, information was received in writing or through technical briefings from several States, including the Syrian Arab Republic. Furthermore, other States have informed the Mechanism in writing that any relevant information, if found, would be forwarded to the Mechanism.

31. In addition, the Leadership Panel received invitations and visited several Member States in order to receive information relevant to its mandate and to supplement the fact-finding mission information. Information was also received in bilateral meetings and consultations in New York and The Hague.

32. The Leadership Panel will continue such contacts, including visits to countries in the region.

Cooperation with the Syrian Arab Republic and all parties in the Syrian Arab Republic

33. On 11 December, the United Nations and the Syrian Arab Republic concluded an agreement concerning the status of the Mechanism in order to ensure the timely, safe and secure conduct of the mandate of the Mechanism in the Syrian Arab Republic. Thereafter, the Leadership Panel visited Damascus on 17 December for meetings with the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic. During the visit, the Panel met with Faisal Mekdad, Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs, who conveyed the readiness of the Government to cooperate with the Mechanism.

34. At that meeting, a technical visit was agreed upon to allow the Mechanism to obtain further information from the Government. The technical meeting between Syrian experts and members of the investigative team is scheduled to take place in phase II, after the Mechanism completes its review of the fact-finding mission material and non-fact-finding mission material collected.

35. At the meeting in Damascus, the Government also confirmed the receipt of the first request for information. Subsequently, another request for information was dispatched and responses to both requests were received in writing. The information received is being analysed by the investigation team.

36. The Mechanism intends to request the Government for access to locations, individuals and materials in the Syrian Arab Republic as it deems necessary for its investigations.

37. In addition, the Leadership Panel informally received the National Coalition of Syrian Revolutionary and Opposition Forces in November. They discussed the mandate of the Mechanism, and the Panel reiterated the need for cooperation, including the need to receive relevant information, from all parties in the Syrian Arab Republic. The Mechanism intends to make further contacts with parties in the Syrian Arab Republic in phase II.

Further activities under phase I

38. Immediately after the Mechanism became fully operational, the Leadership Panel held a workshop in The Hague from 16 to 19 November 2015, with the participation of the Mechanism's staff and those identified for recruitment. The workshop formally initiated the Mechanism's investigative work and allowed for discussions on its mandate, priorities and principles, including the investigation plan and the strands of investigation. In addition, it provided an opportunity for the Mechanism to hear from the leaders of the fact-finding mission on their work and findings while arrangements were being put in place for the actual provision of full access to the fact-finding mission information and evidence.

39. On 14 December, having concluded the necessary arrangements with OPCW and the Syrian Arab Republic, the Mechanism met in The Hague to further develop the investigative workplan and to discuss progress made in information collection and analysis.

40. Having conducted a preliminary review and analysis of the fact-finding mission material, the Mechanism held meetings in The Hague and thereafter in New York in January to review and adjust as necessary the Mechanism's investigative methodology and workplan. In addition, the Mechanism continued to develop its operational guidelines and standard operating procedures. Furthermore, the Leadership Panel adopted a case management and decision-making process, including the identification of potential cases for investigation by the Mechanism as outlined below.

Mapping of the incidents investigated by the fact-finding mission

41. A mapping exercise was conducted to identify the specific incidents in which: (a) an investigation had been carried out by the fact-finding mission into the alleged use of chemicals as weapons in the Syrian Arab Republic; and (b) the fact-finding

mission had determined that the incident involved or likely involved the use of chemicals as weapons.

42. A total of 116 alleged incidents of the use of chemicals as weapons in the Syrian Arab Republic are mentioned in the fact-finding mission reports and the annexes thereto published to date (S/2015/138, S/2015/908 and S/2016/85). OPCW investigated 29 of them. The Mechanism has the mandate to investigate those cases in which the fact-finding mission concluded that the incident(s) concerned lent credence to the view that toxic chemicals were used, likely involved the use of one or more chemicals, and confirmed with utmost confidence exposure to a chemical substance. This comprises the following 23 incidents, in chronological order:

1. Kafr Zita, Hama Governorate, 10-11 April 2014
2. Al-Tamanah, Idlib Governorate, 12 April 2014
3. Al-Tamanah, Idlib Governorate, 18 April 2014
4. Kafr Zita, Hama Governorate, 18 April 2014
5. Talmenes, Idlib Governorate, 21 April 2014
6. Al-Tamanah, Idlib Governorate, 29-30 April 2014
7. Al-Tamanah, Idlib Governorate, 22 May 2014
8. Al-Tamanah, Idlib Governorate, 25-26 May 2014
9. Qmenas, Idlib Governorate, 16 March 2015
10. Sarmin, Idlib Governorate, 16 March 2015
11. Binnish, Idlib Governorate, 23 March 2015
12. Sarmin, Idlib Governorate, 23 March 2015
13. Sarmin, Idlib Governorate, 26 March 2015
14. Idlib, Idlib Governorate, 31 March 2015
15. Kurin, Idlib Governorate, mid-April 2015
16. Idlib, Idlib Governorate, 16 April 2015
17. Al-Nerab, Idlib Governorate, 27 April 2015
18. Al-Nerab, Idlib Governorate, 1 May 2015
19. Al-Nerab, Idlib Governorate, 2 May 2015
20. Saraqib, Idlib Governorate, 2 May 2015
21. Sarmin, Idlib Governorate, 16 May 2015
22. Idlib, Idlib Governorate, 20 May 2015
23. Marea, Aleppo Governorate, 21 August 2015

43. In relation to the alleged incident of 15 February 2015 in Darayya, where the fact-finding mission found a "high degree of probability that some of those identified as being involved [in the incident] were at some point exposed to sarin or a sarin-like substance" (see S/2016/85), the Director General of OPCW recommended that the matter be further investigated by the fact-finding mission.

The further investigation is "to determine when or under what circumstances [the exposure of individuals to sarin or a sarin-like substance] might have occurred" (ibid., enclosure I). The Mechanism understands that further investigations by the fact-finding mission are ongoing in relation to this incident. The Leadership Panel will wait for the results of those investigations.

Screening and prioritization

44. After the incidents were sorted out and it was determined which of them fell within the Mechanism's mandate, they were prioritized on the basis of information available to the Mechanism. A fact sheet was developed for the 23 incidents to include relevant information.

45. The incidents were then evaluated on the following four variables of equal weight: (a) severity (number of death and casualties, secondary contaminations, etc.); (b) delivery method and munition; (c) quantity of data; and (d) forensically verified information. An assessment value was applied to all the variables, with a score given to the following: (a) consistency and coherence among the accounts given by various sources on the incident; and (b) ability to independently verify and corroborate the information already available.

46. Out of this process, a number of potential cases for investigation have emerged. As at 5 January 2016, the following incidents had been identified as potential cases (in chronological order):

1. Kafr Zita, Hama Governorate, 11 and 18 April 2014
2. Talmenes, Idlib Governorate, 21 April 2014
3. Qmenas, Idlib Governorate, 16 March 2015
4. Sarmin, Idlib Governorate, 16 March 2015
5. Marea, Aleppo Governorate, 21 August 2015

47. The Mechanism continued to review and analyse the rest of the fact-finding mission information and evidence received from non-fact-finding mission sources in January 2016. Such information was fed into the fact sheets. As a result, further incidents have emerged that would merit potential case status, such as the incident in Binnish, Idlib Governorate, on 23 March 2015. This is an ongoing process, and as more information is received and analysed the list of potential cases may change.

48. The Leadership Panel will finalize the list of cases for investigation in February 2016. As of March 2016, cases identified will be investigated until sufficient information and evidence are gathered to allow the Mechanism to present its findings in subsequent reports to the Security Council.

49. The Leadership Panel notes that further alleged incidents may be investigated by the fact-finding mission. Accordingly, there could be further incidents that may fall within the Mechanism's mandate and be potential cases for investigation.

50. The Leadership Panel also notes that the situation on the ground in the Syrian Arab Republic will affect the Mechanism's investigation, as it will likely have an impact on the sources of, and access to, information and evidence. If on-site investigations are deemed not feasible, the Mechanism would follow developments

in the area(s) concerned and be prepared to take any opportunity that may arise to conduct an on-site investigation should the situation change.

V. Concluding remarks

51. The Leadership Panel strongly believes that all individuals, groups, entities or Governments that have any role in enabling the use of chemicals as weapons, for whatever reason and under any circumstances, must understand that they will be identified and made accountable for these abhorrent acts. As such, the Panel hopes that its investigation will act as a deterrent and contribute to the elimination of the use of toxic chemicals as weapons.

52. The Leadership Panel also believes that the process of identifying those involved in the use of chemicals as weapons is a complex task for which the Mechanism will require the continued support and cooperation of all States and other sources, in particular so that the Mechanism can access and obtain information that will assist in its investigation. In this connection, the Panel wishes to convey its appreciation for the full cooperation received from States and others in support of its work thus far, including the generous financial contribution received.

53. Lastly, the Leadership Panel wishes to express its appreciation for the support received from the United Nations Secretariat, in particular the Office for Disarmament Affairs, and from the Technical Secretariat of OPCW.

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Letter dated 10 February 2016 from the Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

I have the honour to transmit herewith information on the recruitment of foreign terrorist fighters, facilitation of their cross-border movement into Syria and the supply of weapons to the terrorist groups active there (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter and its annex circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) V. **Churkin**
Permanent Representative

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Annex to the letter dated 10 February 2016 from the Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

Recruitment of foreign terrorist fighters, facilitation of their cross-border movement into Syria and the supply of weapons to the terrorist groups active there

Reportedly, representatives of ISIL — with help from the Turkish intelligence services — have established an extensive network in Antalya for the recruitment of individuals who have arrived in Turkey from the post-Soviet States, to enable their participation in the Syrian conflict and possible transfer to Russia.

The group of recruiters consists of a Kyrgyzstan national named Abdullah; a native of Adygea named Azmet; a native of Tatarstan named Elnar; a Russian Federation national named Ilyas; an Azerbaijan national named Adil Aliev; and a native of Karachay-Cherkessia named Nizam. They are led by a Russian Federation national, Ruslan Rastyamovich Khaibullov (also known as Baris Abdul or by the pseudonym "The Teacher"), born on 1 April 1978 in Tatarstan. He lives with his family in Antalya. He has a Turkish permanent residence permit.

Recruitment takes place with the knowledge of the temporary detention centre administration. If a detainee agrees to accept Islam and engage in terrorist activity, the recruiters promise to "do a deal" with the Turkish law enforcement agencies and offer, free of charge, the services of a Turkish lawyer, Tahir Tosolar. Sultan Kekhursaev, a Chechen who is a Turkish national, has also made visits for the same purpose to detention centres where foreigners are held.

In September 2015 a group of more than 1,000 ISIL fighters who had come from countries in Europe and Central Asia were taken from Turkey to Syria through the border crossing at Alikaila (Gaziantep).

The routes for the movement of fighters pass very close to the Turkish-Syrian border through Antakya, Reyhanlı, Topaz, Şanlıurfa and Hatay.

In March 2014 the head of the Turkish National Intelligence Organization (MIT), Mr. H. Fidan, coordinated the transfer of a large ISIL unit headed by Mahdi al-Kharati, a Libyan national. The fighters were taken by sea from Libya to Syria through the Barsai crossing on the Turkish-Syrian border.

Since late December 2015, with the assistance of the Turkish intelligence services, arrangements have been made for an air route for moving ISIL fighters from Syria through Turkey to Yemen using Turkish military air transport. An alternative means of transporting fighters is by sea to the Yemeni port of Aden.

Russian Federation nationals who maintain contact with representatives of the security, police and administrative authorities in a number of Turkish cities, including Istanbul, are involved in recruitment through Turkish madrasas.

It is well known that wounded ISIL fighters are being provided with places to rest and receive treatment in areas of Turkey bordering Syria. At least 700 fighters were recuperating in Gaziantep in 2014.

Reportedly, beginning in 2015, Turkish intelligence services assisted in the removal from Antalya to Eskişehir of what was termed a "Tatar Village", which houses ethnic Tatar fighters and accomplices of the terrorist group Jabhat al-Nusrah who are natives of Tatarstan, Bashkortostan and Mordovia. Some of them are dual Russian-Turkish nationals.

One of the people actively involved in the Village is Timur Maunirovich Bichurin, a Russian national born on 15 December 1969 who is a native of Kazan and since January 2014 has been acting as an accomplice, helping Islamists fighting in Syria.

In December 2014, Turkish intelligence services helped to set up camps in Turkey, particularly in Hatay Province, to gather illegal migrants and provide training in preparation for the dispatch of extremist gangs to Syria. In January 2015, the Turkish MIT was involved in the operation to merge three terrorist bands, Osman Gazi, Omer bin Abdulaziz and Omer Mukhtar, into a group called the Sultan Abdulhamid Brigade, of which Omer Abdullah was appointed commander. The members of this group are trained in a camp in Bayır-Bucak in Turkey under the leadership of instructors from special operations units of the Turkish Armed Forces general command and MIT personnel. The activities of the Sultan Abdulhamid Brigade are coordinated with the activities of Jabhat al-Nusrah fighters in the north of the Syrian province of Latakia.

It is well known that on 21 September 2015, in the Syrian town of Tell Rıfaat, representatives of the Syrian opposition who had received military training at a camp in Kırşehir in Turkey had delivered weapons to Jabhat al-Nusrah fighters.

Deliveries of weapons to terrorist groups in Syria are reportedly still taking place, profiting from the facilities of Turkish-based foundations İnsan Hak ve Hürriyetleri ve İnsani Yardım Vakfı (IHH — Foundation for Human Rights and Freedoms and Humanitarian Relief), İmkander and Öncü Nesil İnsani Yardım Derneği.

Supplies of various forms of weapons, military equipment and ammunition are arriving from abroad via the Turkish port of İskenderun. Military equipment and supplies are transported from there through Hatay Province (Öncüpinar border crossing) to Aleppo and Idlib in Syria using vehicles belonging to IHH, İmkander and Öncü Nesil with the following Turkish registrations: 33 SU 317, 06 DY 7807, 33 SU 540, 33 SU 960, 42 GL 074 and 31 R 5487. Within Syria, the weapons and ammunition are distributed to Turkmen gangs and Jabhat al-Nusrah units.

On 15 September 2014, representatives of IHH brought supplies of weapons and medicines from Bursa through the Ceylanpınar border crossing (Reyhanlı district) by vehicle into Syria for ISIL groups. This shipment was followed and escorted through Turkey by a vehicle carrying MIT personnel.